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never succeed. The only way out of the practical difficulty is to require each student to provide himself with a copy of the more important cases, and this is now made possible by the publication of the collection edited by Dr. Boyd. Less extensive than Professor Thayer's collection, it embraces in a volume of nearly seven hundred pages the most important decisions on the leading constitutional questions that have arisen in the course of our governmental history. These decisions are grouped under certain headings which constitute the divisions of the book. The several groups of decisions bear on the following subjects: the validity of legislation, taxation, money, commerce, the police power, general (implied) powers, executive powers, war, *ex post facto* laws and bills of attainder, impairment of contracts, civil and political rights, the federal government and the states, international relations, Indian affairs, jurisdiction of the federal courts, political questions, and the enforcement of executive power by judicial process. Through the use of these decisions it will be possible to give to instruction in constitutional law, even in undergraduate courses, a more attractive or less sterile form.

BERNARD MOSES.

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*A Discourse Concerning the Currencies of the British Plantations in America.* By WILLIAM DOUGLASS. Edited by CHARLES J. BULLOCK, PH.D. (Economic Studies of the American Economic Association.) New York: The Macmillan Company, 1897. 12mo. pp. 111.

DR. WILLIAM DOUGLASS was a Scotch physician, born in 1691, who early came to Boston, and there pursued his profession, gaining a considerable reputation in medicine and incidentally publishing several works on economic subjects. Of these writings the present *Discourse* is one of the best, Dr. Bullock, indeed, ranking it "next to Pelatiah Webster's *Political Essays*." The reprint contains, besides the tract itself, an interesting biographical and critical sketch of Dr. Douglass by the editor.

The *Discourse Concerning the Currencies* first made its appearance in London in 1739, and was but one of a multitude of controversial pamphlets on the monetary question. Long before it was printed, a systematic agitation for the debasement of the currency had been going on. Private individuals had issued their own notes as money, and

the various colonies had obtained means for meeting fiscal necessities by large issues of paper currency. The result had been a heterogeneous circulation of low and unstable value, and the usual deterioration of business morality consequent upon the use of a fluctuating standard. It is this condition of things which is discussed by Dr. Douglass. After a brief survey of the monetary situation in the various colonies and some historical review of antecedent circumstances, he proceeds to attack the general government-paper question and to discuss the current schemes of reform. His fundamental contention is that the citizens and not the state should provide the currency needed; and he clearly shows the necessity of a nation's adopting the same standard of value as that used by the countries with which it trades.

Interesting as is Dr. Douglass's tract (from a historical point of view), especially at the present time, there may be doubts as to the general expediency of such reprints. Dr. Douglass's pamphlet contains nothing of any present moment, its arguments being now the tritest of dry-as-dust commonplace in current monetary controversy. It is only to the curious investigator and student of currency history and theory that it can have any special value. Something of more immediate importance might well have been substituted. But this amounts merely to a general criticism upon a prevailing literary fashion, and may well be waived in the present instance.

H. PARKER WILLIS.

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*La funzione della banca.* Di A. DE VITI DE MARCO. Rome: Tipografia della R. Accademia dei Lincei, 1898. 8vo. pp. 34.

PROFESSOR DE VITI DE MARCO'S essay although appearing merely as a "Nota" seems to have been intended as an exposition of the fundamental ideas of banking theory. The services rendered by banks are divided for the purposes of discussion into two classes (1) those to private individuals and (2) those to the state. There is some introductory historical treatment of the evolution of banking practice after which the author slips into a study of the functions performed by the modern bank. Leaving out of account certain operations not usually performed by the majority of banks existing under a free-banking system like our own, the treatment is fairly general and may be considered of universal application. It is thus a pleasing change from the diffuseness and